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Rome Sept 24 1874

My dear Maria

To return safe & without fear from
arms
robbers I had an Escort of 2 Carabineers which
cost me 9 shillings - There was no actual fear
but yet a sentinel might have done for me
I took my 6 baths as some slight swelling had
shown on my ankles, which now is gone & I
am well & strong for me & able to paint at
a lusty rate

Tom wrote me a nice chatty letter
full of news & good things, he is a "nice broth
of a boy" still as he always was - but he wonders
why I dont give up my painting? as I am alone
in my only real comfort & consolation & is
a splendid amusement. I am now on my 3d
pictures of this year one of which I sold & hope
still to do a lot of business which is also a comfort

You'll remember me drawing my daddy
when I was 6 or 7 years old, so, you cannot remem
ber, but it was pronounced a good likeness, give
up my painting? Quick he may catch it, tis no
fatigue to me whereas doing nothing is - I write

also but painting I excell in & my pictures are among the best I have ever done – Haydon did his finest works after he was 80!! & why may not I – I write on my present works my name & date "in his 80th year" X

I found Tivoli very tiresome, for all the nice words & places where I used to walk are now shut up as the people cut the trees for fire wood & the beggin children threw stones at me so I supplied myself with a lot of farthings & they were content – I did the votive picture for the church as the people consider my cure a miracle on the 22d ult. when I returned I found my house all so clean & in such order for Madam Valeriani my landlady had herself done it all I assure you that I am very comfortable except in my loneliness, tho in my cab & stroll I always pick up some friend for 2 hours & get strength in this way

X My new picture is from Keats poem of "Isabella or the pot of Basil" she is mourning over the Basil which conceals her lovers head – I do not write to well as I have continually been painting X Even now my

Music

gets a little brush up, but my fingers are sadly out of
drawing & I cannot make the trill, but I can do enough
to amuse me & hope to take to it in the long winter
evenings - Tom has the advantage in his charming
daughters about him & dear Emma - You see, all my dear
old friends are dead & the new ones are snobs & not at
all my companions & now that my Constitute is
done people seem to think that I am nothing &
try to forget my painting, this is cruel
Tom kicks at my saying "ungrateful world" but
I meant only my english enemies who have shown
such envy & malice in return for my daily good
deeds - & Byron says "For benefits turn poison in
base minds" - altho I have beaten them yet 'tis a
pain to be in such a conflict, tho' now I am near
out of it, but I do not yet know the slanders they
have uttered against me & I am too proud to enquire
I do not smoke nor shall I ever, for I should
soon set the house on fire
We have great abundance of fruit, peaches
8 for a halfpenny & figs 10. the grapes also are ready
every thing must now be cheap for the plenty is great
Yesty I had a pleasant visit from Edwin Brett
(friend of E. Berry) on his way to Australia
The Acqua Marcia at last pays interests in
October & altho I gave the thousand pound 50 shares

How I should like to have you at my elbow & to chat away the live long day

My Pa gave me two splendid nosegays on my birth day, you are always gay on yours as you burn the Pope

Now you must not tire your hand to write to me again so splendidly & to dash me for I have not been able to call up any thing pleasant, indeed I should like dear Emma to write for I am sure that she must be a great comfort to you - I always think of her "as the sweet little cherub that sits aloft & keeps watch for the life of poor Jack" - my love to all your dear ones

your loving brother

Joe

P.S I am trying to get up an English company back in my theatre for the Italians have the vile custom of the Prompter reading every word for them to follow, my nerves cannot stand it